

Department of Human Services

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DHS Office of
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Articles in Today's Clips Tuesday, November 27, 2007

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DETROIT

Mother got welfare in cremated boy's name

Parents could be charged with fraud

November 27, 2007

BY BEN SCHMITT

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The mother of a baby whose skeletal remains were found in a Detroit basement's ceiling collected welfare and food stamps in the child's name for almost two years after the infant's death, authorities said Monday.

Detroit police and state officials are investigating possible welfare fraud charges against Nickella Reid, 24, and her boyfriend, Joseph Miller, 27, both of Detroit.

Advertisement

Their son Deuntay Miller died nearly two years ago in his parents' care. They told police that they tried to cremate 1-year-old Deuntay in a barbecue grill to avoid funeral costs.

But police said Monday that Reid has been collecting welfare and food stamps in the names of Deuntay and four other children, all 5 or younger. Police said she received more than \$700 in monthly food stamps.

Maureen Sorbet, Michigan Department of Human Services spokeswoman, confirmed Monday that Nickella Reid received \$822 a month in welfare.

Matt Frendewey, a spokesman for Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, said the office plans to file a petition in Wayne County Circuit Court to terminate the parental rights of Reid and Miller for the remaining four children. Police said the children have been placed in protective custody.

Deuntay's remains were discovered Friday as Detroit police investigated burn injuries to another 1-year-old boy, who police said turned out to be Deuntay's brother.

Reid and Miller were arraigned Saturday in 36th District Court in Detroit on charges of first- and second-degree child abuse in the 1-year-old's injuries.

Police and prosecutors are weighing whether to charge the couple in connection with the cremated baby.

Details of Deuntay's death came to light as detectives continued to interview Reid about what happened to the 1-year-old, who had burns over one-third of his body.

Police said Reid told investigators that Miller scalded their son with water in their home on Lillibridge in Detroit.

Reid then told police of Deuntay's death and directed them to Miller's sister's home on Lappin, where the infant's remains had been sealed in the ceiling. Officers from the Violent Crimes Task Force made the discovery.

The parents' explanations differ as to how Deuntay died, police said. An anthropologist is examining the remains to try to determine the cause of death.

Reid is being held at the Wayne County Jail on a \$400,000 bond. Miller's bond is \$700,000.

Contact **BEN SCHMITT** at 313-223-4296 or bschmitt@freepress.com.



Tuesday, November 27, 2007

Couple face abuse charges

18-month-old boy with burns in serious condition; mom may be charged in welfare fraud.

Kim Kozlowski / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- The mother of a baby whose cremated skeletal remains were hidden in a ceiling collected food stamps in the name of the deceased child for nearly two years, Detroit police said Monday.

Welfare fraud charges are pending against Nickella Reid, 24, who was arraigned Saturday, along with her boyfriend, Joseph Miller, 27, on first- and second-degree child abuse charges for injuries to another one of their children.

In that case, their 18-month-old son was hospitalized with burns over one-third of the body. He was in serious condition at Children's Hospital on Monday, upgraded from fair on Sunday.

The couple also have three other children, ages 4, 3 and 4 months old, who have been placed in foster care.

A fifth child, Deuntay Miller, died in March 2006. Reid told investigators that Miller cremated their 1-year-old son in a barbecue grill and when his bones wouldn't disintegrate, he hid them in the ceiling of an east side Detroit house, where his sister used to live.

The ghastly story of Deuntay's death two years ago unraveled when child protective workers began interviewing Reid about how her son was burned.

She broke down and said she and Miller were unable to afford a funeral, so his father tried to incinerate his body in a grill. When that didn't work, she said, Miller hid the remains.

No charges have been filed against the couple in connection with the death of Deuntay.

The couple was receiving an \$822 a month in cash assistance, according to Department of Human Services spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet. But she declined to say whether the grant included Deuntay.

Penalties for welfare fraud vary, Sorbet said, but can include a payback of funds illegally received and criminal charges.

A preliminary examination is scheduled for Dec. 4 for the couple, who are being held in Wayne County Jail on \$400,000 and \$700,000 bonds, respectively.

Freelance writer David G. Grant contributed to this report.

Find this article at:

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071127/METRO/711270349>

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Couple indicted in infant's death

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

WYOMING -- A former Wyoming woman is facing allegations in Virginia that she and her husband neglected their 2-month-old son, who died March 26, 2006, from an undetermined cause, according to online court records and a Virginia television station. Alisha Huhn, who listed her address as Wyoming, is jailed and her husband, Anthony Huhn, is considered a fugitive by Norfolk, Va., authorities, who indicted the couple earlier this month. Alisha Huhn is charged with child neglect. Her husband faces that count and an allegation of "malicious wounding," court records show. Television station WAVY-10 reported Monday that the criminal counts are related to the boy's death.

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Detroit Free Press

Oakland County news briefs

November 27, 2007

PONTIAC: Hearing on girl found in filth has been postponed

The pretrial hearing on the fate of a 9-year-old girl who was removed from a filthy Southfield home last week was adjourned Monday so attorneys will have more time to prepare.

The child, who is not being identified by the Free Press, was placed in foster care after investigators found her living in a dirty home on the 24000 block of Edinburgh. Prosecutors are seeking to terminate the parental rights of her mother, Stephanie Cooper. The child's grandmother, Agnes Cooper, 63, died in the home Nov 6.

A second hearing on parental rights termination is to be held Dec. 11 in Oakland County family court.

Compiled by Korie Wilkins, John Wisely and Emilia Askari



Filing false police report charges coming

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

DEAN BOHN

THE SAGINAW NEWS

COLEMAN -- Coleman police were seeking a warrant to charge a Coleman woman with filing a false police report after she claimed her children were kidnapped.

The woman, 27, left her two children with a baby-sitter over the weekend and did not return when she said she would, police said. The baby sitter called the two children's paternal grandparents, who picked them up and now are caring for them.

Meanwhile, the woman got into an altercation with other residents at the apartment complex where she lives and "went ballistic," said Coleman Police Chief Larry R. Nielsen, saying the mother assaulted another woman and cut her hand when she broke some windows. Emergency medical staff treated her at the scene.

Police jailed her on allegations of assault and destruction of property. She paid a \$100 bond and police told her the children were with the grandparents. She then filed a police report that the grandparents kidnapped her children, the chief said.

"She also wanted our office to put out an Amber Alert for the children, but we wouldn't do it because we knew where they were. In fact, Midland County sheriff's deputies and one of our officers told her exactly where her children were, numerous times.

"It appears (the children's parents) are going through a divorce, and both have custody," Nielsen said.

If prosecutors charge her with filing a false police report claiming kidnapping, she could face four years in prison. If the charge is filing a false police report claiming kidnapping-custodial interference, it is a 90-day misdemeanor. v

Dean Bohn is a staff writer at The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9679.

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Published November 27, 2007



(Photo by BECKY SHINK/Lansing State Journal)

Testifying at Capitol: Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan speaks before the Child Protection Task Force on Monday morning at the Capitol. "The phenomenon of children dying in state care is one that deserves special scrutiny," Corrigan said. "We know that there are many more deaths than made the newspapers."

Recommendations

Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan proposed four recommendations to the House GOP's Child Protection Task Force:

- Form an independent commission "outside of the partisan political process" to review child deaths under state care. Currently, five bodies can review cases, and a sixth is being formed.
 - Create a single statistical database with information on children who die while in state care. Currently, none exists.
 - Pass a law that would require the Department of Human Services to notify the state's Children's Ombudsman of each case in which a child in state care died.
 - Include the judicial branch in child death case reviews.
- Greg Bird, spokesman for House Speaker Andy Dillon, D-Redford Township, said the speaker would consider the recommendations, but hasn't had time yet to review them.

GOP panel says kids in care of state lack protection

Ricky Holland cited as example of 'broken system'

Derek Wallbank
Lansing State Journal

Michigan is failing to protect children who are in the state's care through social services programs or courts, House Republicans said Monday.

And they said the high profile deaths of Williamston's Ricky Holland and other children prove their point.

"We need to fix the system. It's obviously broken," said Rep. Paul Opsommer, R-DeWitt.

Opsommer is one of six representatives, along with Rick Jones, R-Grand Ledge, who sit on the House GOP's Child Protection Task Force.

The panel eventually will make recommendations for bills to reform the system, although it has no timetable for doing so.

The group began its investigation of the state's foster care and child services system Monday with testimony from state Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan.

"The phenomenon of children dying in state care is one that deserves special scrutiny," Corrigan said. "We know that there are many more deaths than made the newspapers."

The total number of children who die annually while under state care is unknown.

While multiple agencies track their numbers, no central tracking agency exists and tracking methods differ between agencies.

That's one of the issues Corrigan said should be addressed.

Ricky Holland's story

Corrigan and legislators frequently invoked the name of Ricky Holland, a 7-year-old Williamston boy who died despite multiple warnings to Child Protective Services that he was being abused by his adoptive parents, Tim and Lisa Holland.

The Hollands now are serving life sentences in connection with Ricky's death.

A report from the Office of Children's Ombudsman found several violations in how Child Protective Services and Department of Human Services handled Ricky Holland's case.

Among the violations cited, Child Protective Services failed to interview all the pertinent people who could have shed light on complaints of Ricky's abuse.

CPS also did not interview Tim Holland during investigations of alleged abuse against some or all of the Holland children.

Disciplinary action was taken against 10 DHS employees, most of whom were reassigned. Then-DHS Director Marianne Udow left the department Sept. 1 to become chief of the Center for Health Care Quality and Transformation at the University of Michigan Health Center.

An earlier committee

The GOP task force is an extension of a similar House committee started by Republicans last session that took testimony frequently blasting Gov. Jennifer Granholm and the Department of Human Services.

House Speaker Andy Dillon, D-Redford Township, declined to re-create the group when his party took control of the House in January.

Dillon spokesman Greg Bird said an existing House committee, Family and Child Services, could handle the investigation but welcomed an additional body looking into the deaths.

"I think that we can certainly look and see what changes can be made," Bird said, adding that he wouldn't go so far as to call the child protection system "broken."

Granholm's role

Liz Boyd, Granholm's press secretary, said the governor welcomes the task force, but has been working on improving the DHS.

"We're pleased that the House Republicans are taking an interest, but this is something we're already working on," Boyd said.

Boyd declined to provide details on how the Granholm administration is addressing the issues.

Staff writer Kevin Grasha contributed to this report.

Contact Derek Wallbank at 267-1301 or dwallbank@lsj.com.

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Child Protective Task Force Meets With The State

November 26, 2007 - 7:00PM

LANSING (NEWSCHANNEL 3) - It's been more than two years since the death and disappearance of 7-year-old Ricky Holland, a foster child in Williamston, Michigan.

It took more than a year for investigators to find his body, after his foster parents Tim and Lisa Holland reported him missing. They since have both been tried and sentenced, and are currently serving life sentences in prison for Ricky's death.

But the highly-publicized case has shed a lot of light on Michigan's Department of Human Services - specifically the state's foster care system - and childrens' advocates have been pushing to make revisions, in order to prevent another situation like Ricky's from happening again.

On Monday, a child protective task force met in Lansing to talk about ways to repair the system. Several lawmakers met with Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan, and together they agreed that the foster care system needs more oversight, to insure that children are safe in their foster homes.

"The D.H.S. is getting more people, and as the Justice said, we shouldn't have fresh college kids looking at the situation we should have the best," said Republican Rep. Rick Jones, of Oneida Township. "We should have the people that are properly trained."

The task force also found that better communication between agencies would help protect children. Justice Corrigan urged the Legislature to pass a law requiring the DHS to notify a child's ombudsman if that child dies under the care of the state.

DEARBORN

Panel to tackle foster care crisis

November 25, 2007

BY JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A who's who of state officials and child welfare experts are to meet Friday in Dearborn to address a crisis in Michigan's foster care system.

Speakers at the daylong Save Our Children Summit 2007 at the University of Michigan-Dearborn are to include state Department of Human Services Director Ismael Ahmed, state Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan, Michigan's Children's Ombudsman Verlie Ruffin, Black Family Development Chief Executive Officer Alice Thompson and Gary Anderson, director of the Michigan State University School of Social Work.

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The conference was organized by Child's Hope, the child abuse prevention council for Wayne County communities outside of Detroit.

Child's Hope board President Gail Bagale said the meeting was called to address child welfare issues highlighted by the well-publicized killings of three children in Wayne County foster homes, as well as the abuse and murder of 7-year-old Ricky Holland in Ingham County uncovered in January 2006.

Some of the topics likely to be discussed include advocacy for legislative action and building community awareness.

The session is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. The deadline to register is 5 p.m. Tuesday. The \$15 cost covers a continental breakfast and lunch.

To register or learn more, go to www.childshope.org or call 313-583-6401 anytime. The campus is at 19000 Hubbard Drive in Dearborn.

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at jkresnak@freepress.com.

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<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071125/NEWS02/711250648/1004>

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MACOMB COUNTY

Judge may deny Grant's sister a visit with kids

Lawyer says child feels 'betrayed'

November 27, 2007

BY STEVE NEAVLING

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The details of how police say their father strangled their mother and dismembered her body no doubt rattled the two children, ages 5 and 7.

And now the 7-year-old daughter of murder suspect Stephen Grant feels betrayed by Grant's sister because she wasn't truthful about the allegations against their father, the children's attorney Mark Torrice said.

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The feelings of betrayal may be so painful, a judge said Monday, that Grant's sister, Kelly Utykanski, shouldn't be granted an unsupervised, three-day visitation during the upcoming holidays unless a psychologist says it's OK.

"I care about the interests of these children," Macomb County Circuit Judge John Foster said. "I do not doubt for a second that both families love these children."

It's unclear exactly what Grant's sister said to the children, who currently live in Ohio with their mother's sister Alicia Standerfer and her husband.

Utykanski, who is allowed two supervised visits a month in Ohio, declined to comment because of a gag order.

Police allege that Grant killed his wife Tara at their Washington Township home in February and cut up her body to hide it in northern Macomb County.

Torrice said the 7-year-old daughter "is very fearful and filled with anxiety" as the criminal trial approaches.

Jury selection is to begin today. Foster also set a Jan. 3 trial to determine who gets custody of the children and whether Stephen Grant will lose his parental rights.

Both families want custody.

Contact **STEVE NEAVLING** at 586-469-4935 or sneavling@freepress.com.

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State objects to 3-day visits to Tara's kids by Stephen Grant's sister

Prosecutor says girl, now 7, has been experiencing emotional distress.

By Jameson Cook
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

The sister of accused killer Stephen Grant asked a judge Monday for a 3-day unsupervised visit with Grant's two children. The children are currently living in Ohio with the sister of Tara Grant, who was allegedly killed by her husband, Stephen.

But the request by the attorney for Kelly Utykanski -- the aunt of the 7-year-old girl and 5-year-old boy -- was met by vehement objections from the state Department of Human Services and the children's guardian ad litem.

"We are adamantly opposed," said assistant Macomb prosecutor Jodi Debbrecht, representing the DHS.

Debbrecht and guardian Mark Torrice, a lawyer, told Judge John Foster in a Macomb County Circuit Court courtroom the days-long visit would not help Grant's daughter, who has been experiencing emotional difficulties and receiving counseling.

"She's got so many issues she's dealing with, with DHS and counseling," Torrice said. "It (3-day visit) cannot be healthy for her at this time. (The girl) especially needs more time with her new specialist. She's in pain."

Foster, a family division judge, delayed making a decision to gather input from therapists and psychologists involved with the children and set a hearing for Dec. 5.

The judge also set a Jan. 3 trial date for the termination of Stephen Grant's parental rights and his sister's adoption petition.

Monday's hearing came on the eve of the start of Stephen Grant's criminal trial in which he is charged with first-degree murder and dismemberment of a corpse for the Feb. 9 strangulation of Tara Grant, 34, in their Washington Township home, and subsequent cutting up and hiding of her body. Jury selection is scheduled to start today in the courtroom of circuit Judge Diane Druzinski.

The children, 4 and 6 at the time, earlier this year were placed with Tara Grant's sister, Alicia Standerfer, and her husband, Erik, in their Chillicothe, Ohio, home.

Kelly Utykanski and her husband, Chris, have been making two, two-hour visits each month, traveling 11 hours round-trip by car. The visits are supervised by an Ohio social services worker and take place at a location outside the Standerfer home.

Utykanski wants the two children to visit at her home in Sterling Heights for two nights between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Judge Foster pointed out in court that denying the Utykanskis' request may not be a foregone conclusion as some attorneys involved in the case may believe. He said social workers' reports about the state of mind of the children have gotten progressively worse while staying with the Standerfers.

"I don't see any progress with the children," he said. "I believe that children are better off with two families that can support them rather than just one. I have the belief that both families love them."

The judge mentioned that with Utykanski and Stephen Grant's other family members, the children still have "an extended family who did not cause their pain."

Foster cautioned those involved in the case to prevent emotions from overriding judgment.

"All of us can be clouded by our own feelings and thoughts," he said.

However, Debbrecht said that according to reports, there are some concerns about the girl's behavior when visiting the Utykanskis.

When the girl visits the Sterling Heights home, she "engages" in isolated activity, Torrice said. The girl feels her aunt and uncle "betrayed" her by being untruthful about the turn of events involving her father and mother, he said.

"She's very mature for her age, and she's very fearful and filled with anxiety about this trial," Torrice said.

But Douglas Oliver, representing Grant in the adoption case, said that reports by counselors show only appropriate interaction between the Utykanskis and the children during supervised visits.

In July, Foster rejected a request by Ohio social services workers to cut off Stephen Grant's children from his family and then ordered the supervised visits in Ohio.

On Monday, Foster said he hopes that the two sides would work out a compromise on the visitation.

Attorney Michael Smith, representing the Standerfers, urged the judge to review all of the reports before making a decision.

"I think we need to talk to the therapist, GAL (guardian ad litem) and DHS and make an informed decision about whether the children should be given unsupervised parenting time with the Utykanskis," Smith said.

Attorneys and individuals involved in the case cannot speak with the media because of a gag order issued by Foster.

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http://www.macombdaily.com/stories/112707/loc_grant001.shtml

Grant's Sister Requests Increased Visitation With Children

ClickOnDetroit

POSTED: 3:25 pm EST November 26, 2007

UPDATED: 5:08 pm EST November 26, 2007

\DETROIT -- Stephen Grant's sister has asked a Macomb County judge if she can have increased visitation rights to her brother's children.

Grant's sister Kelly Utykanski was granted supervised visits with the 7-year-old girl and the 4-year-old boy twice a month for two hours.

Utykanski has asked Macomb County judge John Foster if she can have unsupervised visits with the children for three days a month.

Currently, the children are living with the late Tara Grant's sister, Alicia Standerfer in Ohio.

Judge Foster was cautioned that the 7-year-old girl is having some issues.

"Based upon our reports there are some concern about Lindsey's behavior between her aunt and uncle, the Utykanskis," said Department of Human Services Attorney Jodi Debrechit.

Grant's children's Attorney, Mark Torrice, said the girl has become very fearful about the crime and any further visitation with Grant's family may not be helpful.

Foster has made it clear that he will allow Utykanski to have two days a month of unsupervised visits with the children, unless psychologists in Ohio and Michigan strongly disagree.

"If I get a report to me about something that makes sense as to why it should not be ordered, I would not order it," said Judge Foster.

It could be a few days before the judge will make his ruling. Next year he will make a decision on the permanent placement of the children and Grant's visitation rights.

Grant is accused of killing and dismembering his wife, Tara, in February.

Grant's murder trial will begin Tuesday.

Macomb County is trying to seat a jury by Tuesday.

Several hundred people have been interviewed as potential jurors.

Other courts in Macomb County have been asked to put their cases on hold until a jury is selected in the Grant trial, therefore, some cases in Macomb County may be delayed up to one day.

ClickOnDetroit.com

Pre-School Forced To Close

POSTED: 6:18 pm EST November 26, 2007

UPDATED: 8:00 pm EST November 26, 2007

DETROIT -- Thousands of Michigan pre-school children have learned their school is about to close.

The children are part of a School Readiness program designed for 4-year-olds with hearing, vision or family trouble, which allows the families to get special help.

The state of Michigan spends \$3,400 per child and recently increased funding from \$98 to \$104 million. However, during the government shutdown earlier this year, the state reassessed the program and shifted money away from some School Readiness locations and gave the funds to others.

For example, the Crowley Center School in Lincoln Park lost funding for 145 seats and will now close.

"I'm pretty disappointed, I haven't told my son about it yet," said parent Jay McCarthy, whose son attended the Crowley Center School. "He's going to be very upset, he really looks forward to this every single day, to come here and be with his friends."

Added parent Amy Rodriguez, "These kids are being put out of school early and they are not going to have school for the rest of the year unless parents put them into another program -- which are all full at this point."

It was unclear which schools would receive the money taken from Lincoln Park but, according to a report on Local 4 News, a school in Flint topped the list of needy students.

The School Readiness program in Detroit ranked 28th in the state, but still lost 40 slots. The program, which is based in Lansing, ranked 45th in the state will receive funding for up to 60 students.

The Crowley Center in Lincoln Park ranked 168.

"What's more important turtles or teachers and kids?" asked Maurice Riddle, a grandfather from Lincoln Park. Riddle wondered how Michigan can afford to spend \$300,000 on something like a fence to protect endangered turtles when his grandson is losing his teacher.

"I don't want anything to go extinct," explained Riddle, who described himself as an avid hunter. "But I don't want teachers and students being extinct either."

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**Video: Pre-School Forced To Close
Due To Funding Shift**



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Head Start unanimity is good news for all States need to follow Washington's lead

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

There's not much that Congress and President Bush agree on these days. So the unanimity surrounding the reauthorization of Head Start says much about the worth of the preschool program. And, that, in turn, should help fuel the movement for states to expand and enhance education in childhood's critical early years.

This month, both the House and Senate gave overwhelming, bipartisan support to renewing Head Start, and Bush is expected to sign the measure. Head Start has come a long way from its roots as a summer program for the disadvantaged as part of President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty. It has since helped more than 24 million children develop the social and learning skills they need to be ready to start school, and it also has provided vital health services.

The reauthorization, the first since 1998, includes important changes such as expanding access to more families and improving coordination with states for a better transition of children into school. Some changes didn't go as far as we would have liked; a boost in teacher qualifications was made a goal instead of a requirement, for instance. Nonetheless, the reauthorization is a victory for backers such as Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., as well as others who also see the program as a key tool in narrowing the achievement gap between poor minority students and well-off white children.

Head Start's record of success and research showing the importance of learning in the early years have spawned a popular movement to provide quality preschool to all 4-year-olds regardless of family income. Universal pre-kindergarten is a staple of the presidential campaign, and states across the country are looking at ways they can add early-childhood seats. There's no question as to the benefits, but providing quality programs is extraordinarily expensive, and it's crucial that local jurisdictions make wise use of limited resources.

Money spent before a child gets to kindergarten pays off in years of success both in school and in life.

The Washington Post

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DETROIT

Chilling phone call warned of deaths

Sister describes pair's troubles

November 27, 2007

BY AMBER HUNT

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

By the time Vadene Salaam heard the voice mail from her brother-in-law, she already knew her sister was dead.

That made his message even more chilling.

Advertisement

"It was like Satan was calling," Salaam said. "He said, 'I just killed your effing sister, and I'm gonna kill my effing self.' " Three days after the shooting death of LeDora Gibson in Detroit -- which led to a multi-jurisdictional manhunt for her husband, Anthony Gibson, and his subsequent suicide -- Salaam is filled with what-ifs.

What if she had pushed her sister harder to stay away from Anthony Gibson? What if LeDora had gotten a restraining order? What if she had left her husband earlier?

"She was deathly afraid of him," Salaam said. Her brother-in-law had always been abusive, she said. And it was just a matter of time before his violence would escalate.

Deputy Chief Joyce Motley of Detroit police's Eastern District said police are trying to pinpoint the motivation behind the shooting that also left the couple's 9-year-old son, Christopher, injured.

Salaam's 38-year-old sister was shot several times in the head and neck in a car at Saratoga and Kelly on Detroit's east side as she drove Christopher to a relative's house Saturday night. Bullet fragments hit him in the stomach. He was in fair condition at St. John Hospital in Detroit on Monday.

Anthony Gibson -- a 41-year-old Detroit emergency medical technician -- shot and killed himself at 9:45 a.m. Sunday outside a home in the 1300 block of Nicolet Place, near East Lafayette and Rivard in Detroit.

He had filed for divorce Oct. 17. The Free Press was unsuccessful in reaching his family members.

LeDora Gibson knew she was in danger, her sister said. She had suffered eight years of abuse in her 10-year marriage and had moved to Texas for two months to flee her husband.

She returned Nov. 11 for the sake of their son.

Two weeks later, she was dead.

"She was attempting to have a cordial relationship," said Salaam, 40, of Farmington Hills. "They weren't reconciling. They were very estranged."

She hesitated checking her voicemail because she worried her sister had called for help -- a message that would have haunted her for life.

Instead, she will forever hear the voice of Anthony Gibson gloating about killing LeDora.

"It was really, really eerie," Salaam said. "It was like, 'I got all y'all back now' because he killed her."

<http://www.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=DETROIT%3A+Chilling+phone+call+wa...> 11/27/2007

LeDora Gibson worked as an administrative assistant at the Infant Mortality Program, which works with at-risk women to try to curb the infant mortality rate in Wayne County.

The events surrounding the murder-suicide led to chaos in the Sterling Heights neighborhood where the pair once lived.

The neighborhood essentially was on lockdown when a SWAT team surrounded the couple's home on Wilmington Court.

Police called the Gibsons' neighbors and told them to stay away from windows and doors in case of gunfire.

Officers shouted through bullhorns, trying to reach Gibson. But police said Gibson wasn't there.

Instead, he had driven around overnight, calling relatives on his cell phone and telling them he had shot his wife.

Salaam didn't check her messages until about 4 a.m. By then, police already had told her that her sister was dead.

Contact **AMBER HUNT** at 586-469-4682 or alhunt@freepress.com.

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Article published Nov 27, 2007

Woman, friend arraigned in stabbing

Husband injured, faces domestic abuse charges

By MOLLY MONTAG

Times Herald

KIMBALL TWP.- A township woman and her accomplice are facing felony assault charges after police said both played a role in stabbing the woman's husband Saturday.

Dorothy Smith, 29, was charged Monday with assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder and Eileen Trimble, 49, was charged with assault with a dangerous weapon for stabbing Trimble's husband - Donald Paul Baldwin, 51, of Kimball Township - in the neck.

Police said Smith stabbed Baldwin inside his Henry Street home about 10:30 p.m. while the two women were assaulting him for beating Trimble the night before.

Baldwin was treated and released from the hospital Saturday. He is expected to face domestic violence charges for the Friday incident, which was not immediately reported to police.

Trimble, who faces up to four years in prison, had two black eyes Monday when she appeared in St. Clair County District Court for her arraignment. Smith, who faces up to 10 years in prison, appeared uninjured.

Preliminary exams for the women are scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Dec. 4 in district court.

Police said they "are familiar" with Baldwin and Trimble. Court records show Baldwin has a previous conviction for domestic violence and a case pending in St. Clair County.

In December 2006, Baldwin was sentenced to 93 days in jail and six months probation for a domestic violence offense that occurred on Oct. 25, 2006. According to court records, Baldwin was ordered to have "absolutely no contact of any kind with Eileen Trimble" as part of his probation.

On Oct. 31, Baldwin pleaded guilty to domestic violence. He is scheduled for sentencing at 9 a.m. Dec. 5 in Port Huron.

Smith has two domestic violence convictions in St. Clair County.

Jenny Schultz, executive director of Safe Horizons in Port Huron, said domestic violence victims always should report assaults and not take matters into their own hands.

Trimble said little during her arraignment. When Magistrate Keith Bankson asked Smith if she understood the charge she was facing, she responded "self defense."

Bankson set a \$5,000 bond for Trimble and a \$25,000 bond for Smith.

Conditions of the bonds include no contact with Baldwin and no use of drugs or alcohol.

Police investigating shooting in East Tawas

On Saturday troopers from the East Tawas Michigan State Police post responded to a domestic-related shooting in Plainfield Township in Iosco County.

A 47-year-old man was allegedly shot in the chest by his estranged 40-year-old girlfriend at a Plainfield Township residence. Both the victim and the girlfriend are Garden City residents.

The victim was transported to Tawas St. Joseph Hospital and then air-lifted to Saginaw St. Mary's Hospital where he underwent emergency surgery.

The female was lodged in Iosco County jail for assault. Further investigation is pending.

Suspect in infant's death charged with domestic violence in separate case

Updated: 11/26/2007 3:57:04 PM

LINCOLN PARK — A suspect in the death of a 9-day-old infant was in court Monday to answer charges on a related matter. Christopher Ryan Richardson, 21, was charged with domestic violence, third offense, for allegedly assaulting his live-in girlfriend as they drove their daughter to the hospital Friday.

The baby, Nevaeh Richardson, was bleeding from the nose and mouth and had trauma to her rectum, Police Chief Thomas Karnes said. She died a short while later.

Police are still investigating that case and said charges could come as early as this week.

"All of this stuff kind of ties together and the one is still under investigation," police Detective Lt. John Martin said.

See Wednesday's editions of The News-Herald Newspapers for more information on the case.

— *Jason Alley*

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Grand Rapids Press Letters

November 27, 2007

SCHIP expansion needed

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) bill could provide health care over the next five years to about 4 million more children (raising the total enrollment to 10 million) in working families with incomes too high for Medicaid, but not high enough for them to afford private health insurance.

I am astounded that President Bush vetoed this bill. He claims to be a compassionate conservative! The \$35 billion that SCHIP would cost over five years pales in comparison with the trillion or so dollars we have already spent in our current wars. These expenditures continue unabated at a rate of hundreds of millions of dollars per day. I hope that Congress can re-send a similar bill to the White House, and then be able to override Mr. Bush's next veto.

-- JOSEPH J. WALKER
East Grand Rapids



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Salvation Army bell ringers in short supply, so far...

[Print Page](#)

By FRANK KONKEL
Sentinel-Standard writer

IONIA - The Salvation Army is looking for Ionia County volunteers to hold the red kettles outside local businesses through Christmas Eve.

This is the first year Ionia County has tried to collect money outside local stores that will actually stay in the area.

"Right now, we don't have many volunteers and we desperately need them if we're going to collect anything," said bell-ringer coordinator Mary Bliss. "Counting myself, we only have five volunteers. I need all the help I can get."

The Salvation Army is looking for volunteers to ring bells and collect donations outside local stores from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursdays through Saturdays. Bliss had hoped people could volunteer their time for longer shifts, but now whatever time people can give - even if it's only for an hour or two - she'll schedule them for.

In the past, Salvation Army personnel from Grand Rapids would use Ionia stores - Wal-Mart, Kmart and Walgreen's, in particular - to collect donations from citizens and then bring that money back to their area. Now, the Salvation Army is looking to keep donated funds collected in Ionia County used within county limits.

"All we collect will be dispersed within Ionia County," said Salvation Army business administrator Ray Nichols. "This is one of the ways we raise money, and we have plenty of uses for it."

Included in those uses are aiding people when they're behind on utilities or rent payments, especially around the holidays. Nichols said struggling families dealing with both difficult financial times and a harsh winter climate are primary candidates for donations.

"Last year, we spent more than \$56,000 in Ionia County for those who needed help," Nichols said. "A lot of what we spend is strictly from donations."

The Salvation Army also donates 150 food boxes to Toys for Tots over the holiday season to families who need food.

In addition, the Salvation Army is working with the Michigan Department of Human Services to purchase gifts for foster children throughout Ionia County.

"Even if it's just a few hours, we're hoping some Ionia residents will come out and support the Salvation Army," said Bliss, who will be ringing bells herself for the next few weeks.

"We can make an impact."

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Santa Claus Girls love their spacious workshop

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

By Paul R. Kopenkoskey

The Grand Rapids Press

WALKER -- Barb Bowe has wrapped gifts in some drafty buildings, but a shuttered supermarket the Santa Claus Girls is using again this year isn't one of them.

This is the second holiday season the charity is operating out of a former D&W Food Center at 3410 Remembrance Road NW.

It's a good fit, said Bowe, president of the Press-sponsored charity that provides Christmas gifts to needy children ages 6 months to 12 years.

"We love this building," said Bowe, a volunteer for 11 years. "For one thing, it's heated. And the lights are fantastic."

The 53,000-square-foot former grocery store in Walker enables the volunteers to stay on task, Bowe said.

The building has space to house a bank of telephones and computers, wrap a stream of presents and map out delivery routes. It also has plenty of parking for 300-plus drivers who will arrive on delivery day, Dec. 15.

"We've stepped up a little bit," she said. "We're spoiled now."

Spartan Stores Inc. is happy to provide the building, said Jeanne Norcross, vice president of corporate affairs for the Byron Township-based retailer. If it weren't for the Santa Claus Girls, the building would remain idle, as it has been since the store closed in March 2006, Norcross said.

"As long as we're in a position to be able to provide the space to the Santa Claus Girls, we will do that," Norcross said.

"We felt it was a good use of space to provide it to the Santa Claus Girls to do the work. We don't pass along any expenses to them. Obviously, that works out well for the cause."

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ANTRIM COUNTY NEWS

Community gathers and helps send kids to camp

By Hadley Robinson
Editor

CENTRAL LAKE - Hundreds from around the county filed into the large dining hall overlooking Torch Lake at YMCA Camp Hayo-Went-Ha up to an hour before the Thanksgiving feast would begin Sunday.

Thirty pies and 250 pounds of Turkey later, friends and community members sat stuffed chatting with neighbors and enjoying the atmosphere.

The 24th annual Thanksgiving dinner at Hayo-Went-Ha boasted 220 people in attendance, an alltime record for the celebration.

"t was an outstanding event and a great fund-raiser," said Camp Director David Martin. "Some people don't see each other except for this. I think of it as for those of us who stick it out for the winter."

Though the gathering is about friends and community, by attending the dinner, people are giving to those less fortunate. The proceeds from the event go to "camperships," which send children to camp who otherwise could not afford it.

"The bottom line is it helps kids get to camp," Martin added.

The camperships go towards all three Hayo-Went-Ha summer programs: the boys camp on Torch Lake, in its 105th year, the girls camp on Arbutus Lake in Traverse City and the day camp for younger children on N.E. Torch Lake Drive.

The event could not be put on without volunteers, as most of the camp staff clear out for the winter. This year, the Elk Rapids varsity basketball team came to lend a hand. They directed traffic and parking, set and cleared tables, washed dishes and served as waiters.

Coach Andy Kenney said it is important for the players to give to the community.

"Antrim County gives so much to our schools, we just want to give back," Kenney said. "I want them to realize there's more to their life than basketball."

Kenney said he hopes to do some more community volunteering, and the boys on the team coach youth every Saturday.

"This team is a full-fledged commitment," Kenney said.

Martin said he really appreciated the basketball team and all the volunteers, because it helps direct more money to the campership program.

The Thanksgiving dinner itself has grown tremendously over the years. Frank Rushlow, the full-time camp cook, has prepared the meal the last six years and said the first year there were only 150 people.

Rushlow commented how much he loves doing this event for this many people.

"You know how runners get a runner's high? I do it when I'm in the kitchen," he said. "I'm just in my zone. I get excited."

Rushlow also appreciated being able to visit most tables and make sure people were enjoying themselves and the food.

Maintenance director Doug Gillespie noted what a successful event the Thanksgiving is for the community.

"t really is a good way to close out the season," he said.

Hadley Robinson can be reached at hrobinson@michigannewspapers.com or by calling 231-533-8523.

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Published November 27, 2007

Pay raises eyed

Here are the scheduled pay raises in tentative agreements reached between the state and unions representing state workers:

- Oct. 1, 2008: 0 percent
- Oct. 1, 2009: 1 percent
- Oct. 1, 2010: 3 percent

Contract rejected by state workers' union

Health care costs, shutdown cited as negative factors

Chris Andrews
Lansing State Journal

Members of a union representing 5,000 state government workers have turned down a new contract.

The Michigan State Employees Association members rejected the contract on a 970-554 vote.

MSEA President Roberto Mosqueda said Monday that the union would renew talks with the state this week.

Mosqueda said he thought the brief government shutdown on Oct. 1 was a factor in the rejection.

"We were in the middle of negotiations, we were laid off, called back immediately after that," he said.

"I think there were just a lot of emotions out there."

The MSEA represents a wide range of workers, including plumbers and electricians, maintenance workers and non-attorneys in the Attorney General's Office.

The tentative agreement between the union and the state called for no raise in October 2008, a 1-percent raise in October 2009 and a 3-percent raise in October 2010.

The new contract also would have required members to pay more for health care costs.

"It was pretty much the straw that broke the camel's back," Mosqueda said.

The union also has filed a grievance against the Attorney General's Office challenging temporary layoffs scheduled for Dec. 13-17.

Other unions are voting on tentative agreements as well.

Granholm spokeswoman Liz Boyd said the ratification votes are part of a long process.

"We will not really comment on any of it until the process is completed," she said.

UAW Local 6000 spokesman Alan Kilar said union officials have been getting generally positive feedback in meetings across the state.

Contact Chris Andrews at 377-1054 or candrews@lsj.com.

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Published November 27, 2007

Derek

Melot

dmelot@lsj.com

377-1256

Public is mad; who cares?

Inattentive voters create climate for police HQ project

In the wee hours of the morning, when they give a fleeting amount of time to affairs of state, most Michigan residents come across the truth:

We are getting pretty much the state government we are paying for.

Not in money, mind you, but in simple civic responsibility. Bad citizens inevitably lead to bad politicians.

Take all this after-midnight moaning about the new Michigan State Police headquarters in downtown Lansing. On Sunday, an LSJ headline pronounced "Criticism of new State Police HQ increasing."

In hearing and reading these complaints, one would think this deal was done by Gov. Jennifer Granholm in a parking ramp in the pre-dawn hours a few weeks ago.

That's convenient, of course, because it absolves the public from the fact that this deal's been percolating - in some form - for years. And it's final form took shape right in front of the public, and with the full assent of elected officials of both parties.

As has been explained in previous LSJ coverage, and was summarized in the Nov. 25 story, it took the OK of not one, but two state boards to make this deal: the Legislature's Joint Capital Outlay Committee and the State Administrative Board.

On March 15, the Outlay Committee voted 14-3, with three abstentions, for the lease.

Of those 14, 10 are Democrats and four are Republicans (including Sen. Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt). Three more Republicans voted no and three GOPers abstained.

These 10 representatives and 10 senators were appointed by the legislative leaderships. So, if your state lawmaker says he had nothing to do with the MSP project, ask him or her if he abstained from leadership votes. If they voted for the leadership, they're responsible for who sits on the Outlay Committee.

Next came the State Administrative Board. All seven of its members, from Democrat Granholm to Republican Attorney General Mike Cox and Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, voted for the project, too.

So, it's all right there, folks, out in the open, apparently in stark defiance of a big hunk of public opinion.

Now, did it help that developers Gary Granger and Joel Ferguson have combined to donate at least \$240,000 to politicians in recent years? Undoubtedly.

Is the project location ill-advised and the timing ridiculous? Certainly.

But, as with budget impasses, tax votes and everything else in Lansing, unless and until voters are willing to punish lawmakers for their acts, why in the heck should they care what you think about the MSP project?

Right now, they know voters are too distracted or too lazy to do anything other than grouse. And they are acting accordingly.

What do you think? Write Derek Melot, Lansing State Journal, 120 E. Lenawee St., Lansing, MI 48919. For past columns, visit www.lsj.com/columnists.

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